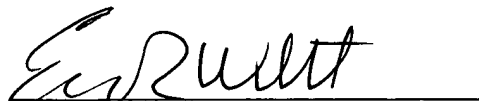## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In this amendment, claims 1, 6, and 14 are amended. Support can be found in paragraph [0031] of the present specification. No new matter is introduced.

Specification. By this amendment, abstract has been amended not to exceed 150 words.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103. The Office Action rejected claims 1-19 under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsuragawa et al. (USPN 5907586; hereinafter Katsuragawa) in view of Itakura et al. (USPN 5418795; hereinafter Itakura). In view of the currently pending claims, the Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

The Applicants submit that Katsuragawa in view of Itakura fails to teach or suggest that a plurality of consecutive input data are branch metric calculated according to a plurality of target level sets, respectively, *wherein said target level sets are different from one another*. As admitted by the Examiner in the last paragraph of page 4 of the Office Action, Katsuragawa does not explicitly teach a multi-data input as stated in the present application. On the other hand, although Itakura discloses a multi-data input, there is no relevant description showing the multiple data are branch metric calculated according to respective target level sets that are different from one another. As the prior art references in combination fail to teach or suggest all the claim limitations, the Applicants submit that the pending claims would not have been obvious from the cited references. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims. If there are any remaining issues preventing allowance of the pending claims that may be clarified by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan R. Witt
Reg. No. 32,512
Attorney for Applicant(s)

Date: March 9, 2006

MADSON & AUSTIN
Gateway Tower West
15 West South Temple, Suite 900
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101
Telephone: 801/537-1700